

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY China

SUBJECT People's Weather Bureau/Institute of Geophysics/  
Status of Meteorology

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1. The Weather Bureau of the People's Republic of China [PWB], with headquarters in Peiping, is now [1954] headed by C W Tu 涂长望. Tu, a capable meteorologist, studied long-range forecasting at University of London under Walker. The greatest needs of PWB are undoubtedly trained observers and instrumentation. Concerning the first need, [redacted] observers are being trained in great numbers among high school students. The requirements for being an observer are much less demanding than those for being a full-fledged meteorologist, and the Communist government can probably provide the PWB with observers at a fairly fast rate. Meteorologists are probably being trained on a much smaller scale at Tsing Hua University in Peiping and at University of Nanking. [redacted] The high schools, Tsing Hua and University of Nanking are probably the only sources of personnel for PWB. As for PWB's second need, that of instrumentation, it is necessary first to consider that the science of forecasting has always been hampered in China by total lack of aerial observation equipment and partial lack of ground observation equipment. [redacted] PWB has now set up a section for instrument development and design. In addition to this, the physics department at Tsing Hua manufactures barometers and probably thermometers, and the Institute of Geophysics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has almost surely started to make radiosonde equipment. Thus, if the needs of PWB for observers and equipment are not already met, they will be in a very short time. Although pure meteorology will progress more slowly, a working weather bureau will be operating efficiently very soon. The Chinese have made their own thermometers and barometers in the past and are probably doing so again. The Institute of Physics of the Academy of Sciences also did this kind of work. For a long time, of course, such instruments were imported from the UK. The greatest equipment need is that of upper air observation equipment - i.e. radiosonde. The Institute of Geophysics has the option either of copying Japanese equipment, which is cheap to manufacture but not very durable, or of copying Soviet equipment, the manufacture of which might cause a financial strain. [redacted] in 1945 the forecasts were fair but limited by the fact that they were based only on surface observations. That limitation must by now have been overcome.

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2. The Institute of Geophysics is now [1954] under the direction of Dr J J Chao 趙九章. Chao has a solid scientific background but has now become an administrator. After obtaining a PhD degree in Berlin, probably at Humboldt University, Chao returned to China, where he served as professor of meteorology at Tsing Hua University in Peiping from 1937 to 1942. (During the war years he moved with the rest of the Tsing Hua faculty to Kunming.) After the war he was made head of the Institute of Meteorology of the Nationalist government, and he probably retained this position under the Communists when they renamed it the Institute of Geophysics. Chao is generally interested in theoretical rather than applied meteorology. He likes to develop younger men, and it seems probable to me that he has assembled a bright young group around him at the Institute. In later years this may tend to make the Institute increasingly important. He probably now has over 20 young meteorologists at the Institute. As organized under the Communists, the Institute of Geophysics probably includes seismology, oceanography and mining studies, but the meteorology section is undoubtedly the major part. [ ] the seismograph which belonged to the Institute of Meteorology is now housed in the Institute of Geophysics. [ ] only one capable seismologist in Peiping in 1945, and he may now be at the Institute of Geophysics. This, however, is only a guess. [ ]

[ ] radiosonde and numerical forecasting are the principal interests. Chao is interested [ ] in the elaborate development of a radiosonde instrument laboratory. This is really not very difficult, and [ ] the men under Chao are fully capable of carrying this out. The study of numerical forecasting is a very different matter. Although [ ] certain of their interest in this field, [ ] equally certain of their inability to get a computer. Such a study would require coordination with the scientists of another country, which of course is possible. A few points about the Chinese Academy of Sciences might be useful here. Most important of all is the fact that it is not an honorary society but an actual research organization. A member of the Academy works at the Academy. For this reason membership is not a great distinction. A man may be a leader in his scientific field and yet not be a fellow of the Academy. Before 1949 the only requirement for membership was a PhD degree from a US or European college. [ ]

3. Tsing Hua University is now an independent technical college. [ ] it is well known that the Communists brought all the liberal arts colleges of Peiping into one University of Peiping and then established a separate scientific college named Tsing Hua. This [ ] is the center of meteorological training in China. President of Tsing Hua is N S Chiang, who [ ] is a political appointee even though he holds a degree from Tsing Hua. Head of the meteorology section is Prof S Z Li 李之, a capable scientist, who was trained in Berlin, again probably at Humboldt. Tsing Hua now has about 6000 students, an increase in enrollment of about 4800 since 1945. Meteorology is placed under the general science department [ ] along with chemistry, physics, geology and geography. Scientific training is probably now more specialized, faster and less complete.



4. University of Nanking probably has a fair to good meteorology section. Two men who very possibly may be in this section are: P H Chu and Y P Hsieh 謝義炳. Hsieh studied at University of Chicago.

5. [ ]

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50X1      b. Li-Jun was a fellow of the Institute of Meteorology before World War II and served as acting director during Chu's tenure at Chekiang. During World War II he served as head of the weather bureau. Around 1949 he moved to South China   
50X1       but he later returned to Peiping to continue working at the Institute of Geophysics, where he is probably a fellow. Li-Jun studied in Germany but does not have a PhD degree. His main interests are climatology and forecasting but his time has most often been occupied with administration. He is not a brilliant administrator.

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